



**Overseas Security Advisory Council**  
*Global Security News & Reports*

## **Ankara, Turkey: 2006 Crime and Safety Report**

### **Crime and Safety**

Europe - Turkey

26 Apr 2006

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### **Overall Crime and Safety Situation**

Turkey's capital and second largest city, Ankara enjoys a relatively low crime rate. The population of Ankara includes military and civilian government employees, diplomats, business people, migrants from rural Turkey, education professionals, and industrial workers. Most of the crime in Ankara is perpetrated against Turkish citizens, and burglary and assault are the most common crimes.

The most significant safety threat to Americans in the Ankara consular district comes from vehicle accidents. Driving in Turkey requires absolute attention; defensive driving is a necessity.

Indigenous and international terrorist groups also continue to operate in Turkey, including in the Ankara area. The detonation of sound bombs by indigenous terrorist groups is a common occurrence throughout Turkey. In the past, most of these groups have not specifically targeted Americans, but the 2003 bombings in Istanbul highlight that Western interests and U.S. allies are now being targeted in Turkey.

## **Political Violence**

The terrorist threat in Turkey originates from indigenous separatist groups, indigenous left and right wing groups, and domestic and transnational fundamental Islamic groups. Information gathered in the aftermath of the 2003 Istanbul bombings indicate that al Qaeda and other international terrorist groups recruit from various segments of Turkish society.

Compared to the 1980s and early 1990s when several Americans were targeted and killed, Americans in Ankara have recently enjoyed a relative respite from terrorist targeting. Most indigenous terrorist groups have operatives in the Ankara area, but these have recently concentrated their efforts on the Turkish government and military interests.

Demonstrations do occur periodically in the Kizilay area of downtown Ankara. Most demonstrations are directed at the Turkish Government of and demonstrators most frequently protest unemployment, poor banking and economic practices. The number of demonstrations directed at the U.S. Embassy has dropped significantly over the past year. Although most protests conclude peacefully, on occasion police engage the demonstrators.

American visitors to Ankara should follow the same security precautions as they would in any large European city. Visitors are encouraged to register with the Consular Section in Ankara via <https://travelregistration.state.gov>.

## **Post-Specific Concerns**

### *Cultural Issues*

Turkish law dictates behavior toward Turkish political figures and institutions, particularly the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. It is a crime in Turkey to insult Ataturk or to deface statues or images of Ataturk. Turkish authorities enforce these laws vigorously.

### *Natural Disasters*

Over the past number of years, several earthquakes have occurred in Turkey but only tremors have been felt in Ankara.

### *Avian Influenza*

While there have only been a few confirmed human cases of Avian Influenza (AI) in eastern Turkey, American visitors to Turkey are strongly encouraged to read and follow the AI guidance available through the Center for Disease Control and the Avian Flu Fact Sheet posted at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

## **Police Response**

If you are the victim of a crime within the city of Ankara, contact the police at 155, the traffic police at 154, and emergency medical services at 112. In the rural areas outside of Ankara, contact the Jandarma at 156.

## **Medical Emergencies**

Emergency medical service is available at Ankara Guven Hosptal, Sismek Sokak #29 Kavaklikdere; telephone: 90-312-468-7220.

## **Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim**

Ankara is not plagued with the kinds of criminal scams that often target tourists in Istanbul; however, Americans should exercise the same amount of caution that they would in any large European city.

The Ulus section of Ankara is a popular shopping area for tourists, police report that purse snatchings and pickpocketings occur occasionally in this area. Vehicle break-ins, while not common, do occur. Travelers should always park in a lighted area and lock their vehicles. Although no cases of hotel room theft have been reported to the Embassy, visitors are strongly recommended against leaving valuables in hotel rooms.

Taxi rides are inexpensive and reliable in Ankara. However, due to cultural norms, female passengers are discouraged from riding in the front seat of taxis.

## **For Additional Information**

The U.S. Embassy in Ankara can be reached 24-hours a day at: 90-312-455-5555. The Regional Security Officer, can be reached at extension 2553. American Citizen Services can be contacted at extension 2322 or 2442. Foreign Commercial Service can be reached at extension 2562. In case of after-hours emergencies, contact the Embassy switchboard and ask for the Embassy Duty Officer.

While there is not an active OSAC Country Council in Ankara, there is a council in Istanbul. For more information, or to attend a meeting, contact the Regional Security Office in Istanbul or OSAC's Eastern Europe Regional Coordinator in Washington. More information can also be found at <http://istanbul.osac.gov>.

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Overseas Security Advisory Council • Bureau of Diplomatic Security

U.S. Department of State • Washington, D.C. 20522-2008

Telephone: 571-345-2223 • Facsimile: 571-345-2238

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